

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20 RSC-01 CU-04 SCI-06 AGR-20

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R 261045Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7416

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 1756

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, EGEN, BU

SUBJECT: POPOV'S PROPOSED TRIP TO U.S.

REF: USUN 3579, SEPTEMBER 1972

1. DURING LAST TEN DAYS I HAVE HAD A SERIES OF INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH LUKANOV, FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE. ON EACH OCCASION HE HAS DISCUSSED FIRST DEPUTY PREMIER IVAN POPOV'S PROPOSED OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE U.S.

2. THRUST OF LUKANOV'S PROPOSITION IS THAT POPOV WOULD LIKE TO MAKE VISIT DURING FIRST QUARTER OF 1974, IF THAT IS NOT FEASIBLE THEN CERTAINLY DURING FIRST HALF OF THE YEAR. POPOV WANTS TO SIGN SOME SIGNIFICANT AGREEMENT BUT NOT THE CONSULAR. POPOV CONSIDERS CONSULAR AGREEMENT MEETS U.S. DESIRES RATHER THAN BULGARIAN AND GOB CONTINUES TO HOPE SECRETARY WILL SIGN THAT AGREEMENT HERE IN BULGARIA.

3. LUKANOV EXPLAINED THAT GOB RECOGNIZES THAT ANY ECONOMIC AGREEMENT INCLUDING MFN OR CREDITS IS OUT OF THE QUESTION IN VIEW PROPOSED TRADE BILL AMENDMENTS. BULGARIANS SEEM TO BE PREPARED RIDE THIS OUT, BUT WANT FAVORABLE MOMENTUM IN RELATIONS TO CONTINUE AND BELIEVE
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POPOV VISIT WOULD CONTRIBUTE SIGNIFICANTLY TO THIS END.

4. WHEN ASKED WHAT TYPE OF AGREEMENT HE HAD IN MIND, LUKANOV SAID TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC AGREEMENT TO WHICH I SAID THIS NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT CULTURAL AGREEMENT AS WELL. LUKANOV REPLIED THAT HE IS NOT AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS CULTURAL EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION IN THE AGRICULTURAL FIELD OR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL. HE ASKED IF EMBASSY WOULD EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES WITH DEPT. AND I AGREED TO DO SO.

5. COMMENT: FROM OUR VIEWPOINT HERE, WE BELIEVE LUKANOV'S PROPOSAL MAKES SENSE, ESPECIALLY SINCE GOB HAS NOW MET VIRTUALLY ALL OUR DEMANDS IN FEBRUARY 1973 AIDE MEMOIRE FOR IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS. WHILE BULGARS REALIZE THAT ECONOMIC BENEFITS CANNOT BE REAPED NOW, THEY ARE UNDER SOME PRESSURE TO MAINTAIN POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS. PROBLEM FOR BULGARIANS OF MAINTAINING MOMENTUM WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC BENEFITS MAY BE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESS FOR RELATED MEASURES, SUCH AS FISHING OR NAVIGATION AGREEMENTS, NEITHER OF WHICH IS IMPORTANT ENOUGH IN ITS OWN RIGHT TO WARRANT MUCH ATTENTION, BUT WOULD BE SUITABLE VEHICLE TO DEMONSTRATE OUR CONTINUED WILLINGNESS TO DEAL WITH BULGARIA AS NORMAL, SOVEREIGN STATE. POPOV VISIT WOULD ALSO PROVIDE GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGH-LEVEL REVIEW (POPOV IS AN IMPORTANT MEMBER OF BCP POLITBURO) ON OTHER PROBLEMS AS WELL AS SUITABLE OCCASION TO SIGN SOME AGREEMENT WHICH IS IN US INTEREST.

5. RECOMMENDATION: DEPARTMENT CONSIDER PRESENTATION TO GOB OF A DRAFT CULTURAL EXCHANGE, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL AGREEMENT. IF IS POSSIBLE GOB WOULD NEGOTIATE SUCH AN AGREEMENT AND CONSIDER IT SUITABLE FOR POPOV TO SIGN DURING HIS US VISIT. IF NOT, WE CAN CONSIDER SOME OTHER APPROPRIATE VEHICLE SUCH AS THOSE SUGGESTED IN PARA 4.

6. WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING DEPT'S REACTION TO RECOMMENDATION AND VIEWS ON POPOV'S VISIT.
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